



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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DEQ offers solutions to assist municipality sewer systems

BATON ROUGE – One of the primary missions of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is to ensure that Louisiana's waterways are kept clean and free of any pollution that may be detrimental to human health or the environment. Outdated and non-compliant municipal sewer systems are a major environmental concern that can plague water quality. DEQ, through the Louisiana Pollution Discharge Elimination System, addresses the needs of the state's water resources through its permitting, enforcement and inspection divisions and is the chief state environmental steward.

Now, DEQ is adding the Municipal Sewage Assistance Program to help enhance and maintain the integrity of the state's waters by helping municipalities with their ongoing water discharge issues.

Many water pollution issues can be traced to inadequate treatment of municipal wastewater discharges. Time, wear, expansion of use and lack of funds can all contribute to a municipality's wastewater treatment plant failing to meet its permit limits, thereby leading to water pollution. Historically, EPA and DEQ would almost universally address these issues with costly fines and penalties which would go to Washington D.C. or Baton Rouge rather than being dedicated to fixing the local systems in a timely manner.

The Municipal Sewage Assistance Program is designed to help municipalities by offering solutions that will address sewage issues by working with them to fix sewage systems while ensuring those monies are invested locally. DEQ can assist by providing compliance schedules, offering training classes and presenting information on funding sources and logistical matters at public meetings. By choosing to work within the MSAP program, municipalities can offer real solutions to their citizens while avoiding costly penalties and lengthy and expensive consent decrees and compliance orders. These measures can potentially bring local economic growth and quality of life enhancements for every Louisiana resident.

"Sometimes when you are trying to get municipalities into compliance, issuing a penalty is not the best way to reach the ultimate goal," said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. "If a city needs the money to invest into the sewage system, it would not help the state or the environment for the city to pay a DEQ-issued penalty. Instead, through the Municipality Sewage Assistance Program, we are offering to provide guidance as to how to get into compliance to the systems with compliance orders."

For additional information, please contact Wayne Slater at 225-219-3715 or the DEQ customer service center at 1-866-896-5337, or email: deqmsap@la.gov.